

CT

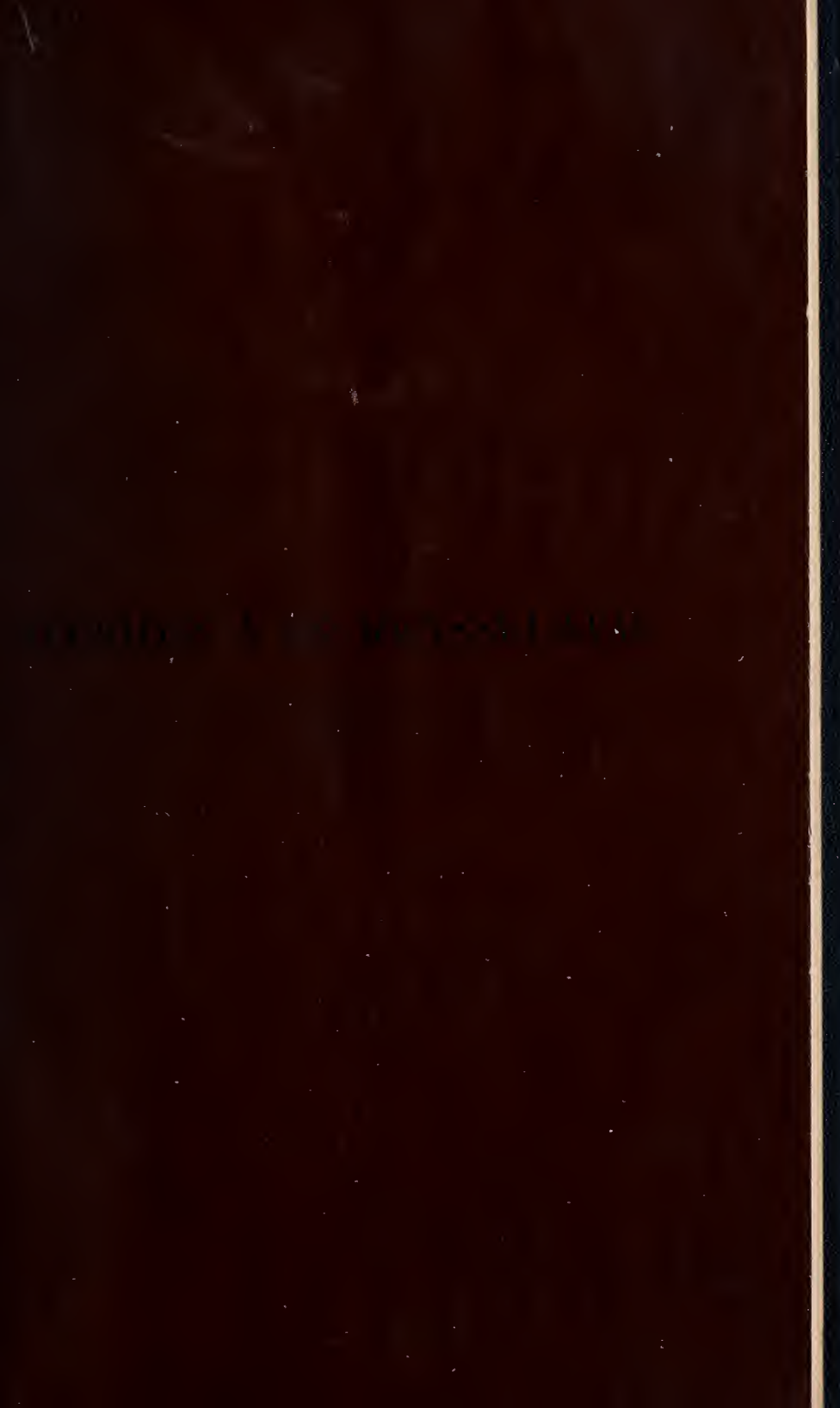
275

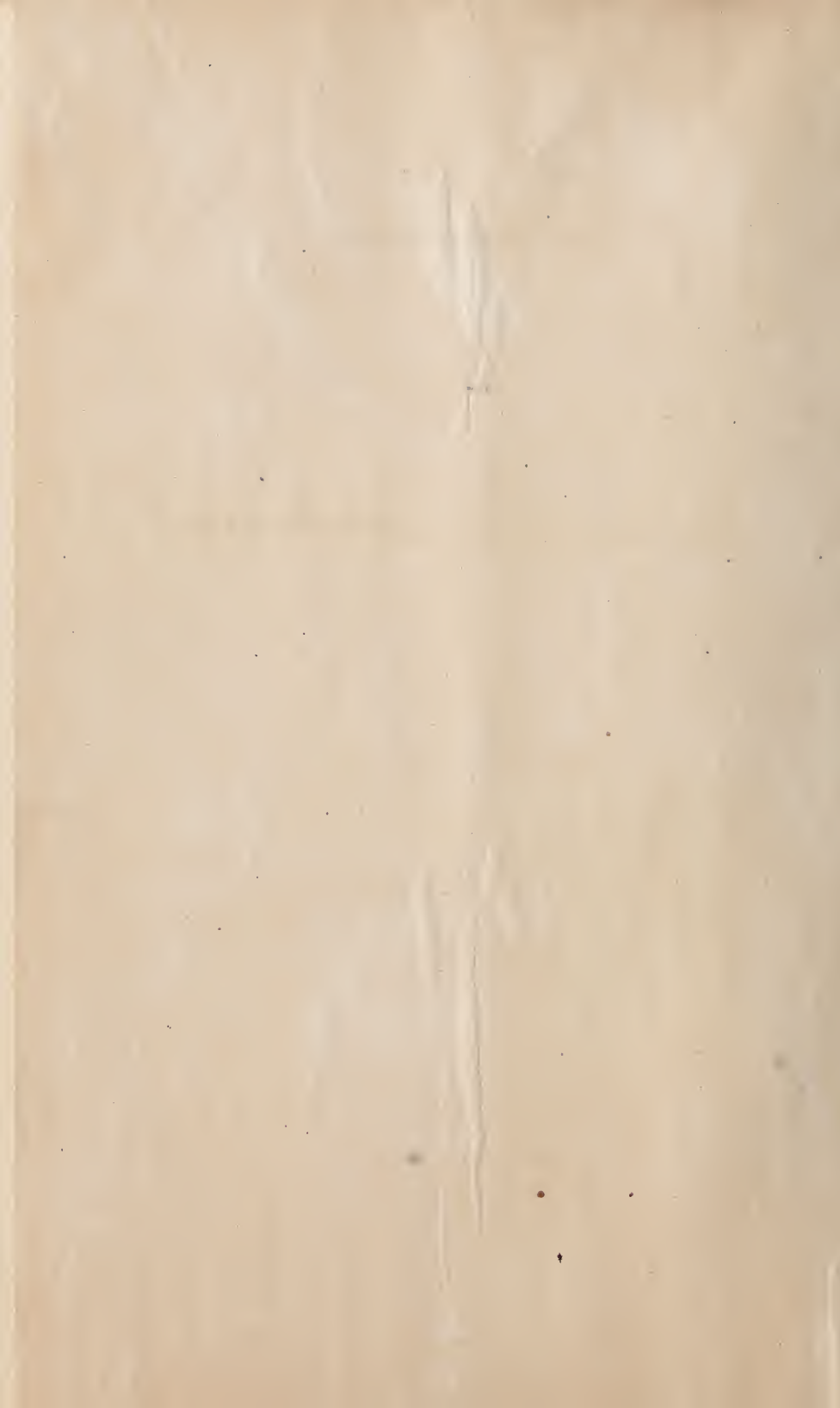
V39I6



Class CT 275

Book V39 I 6





In Memoriam.

17

STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

486

342

BORN 1789, DIED 1868.

ALBANY:

JOEL MUNSELL.

ALBANY:

JOEL MUNSELL.

1868.

ET 275
V3916

IN EXCHANGE

Gullander's Case

1901

1900

A DISCOURSE,

IN MEMORY OF STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER, PREACHED IN THE FIRST
REFORMED CHURCH, ALBANY, SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 31, 1868, BY
REV. RUFUS W. CLARK, D.D.

*Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock
of corn cometh in, in his season.*—JOB v, 26.

This promise, has, in relation to one of our number, been recently fulfilled. Ripe in years, in honors and in virtues; after having passed through the spring, summer, autumn and winter of human life, our venerable brother has been taken, by the great reaper, to the harvest world above. On Monday last, at noon, when the sun was in the meridian, he passed to the world of light, where there is perpetual day, and where no nights' shadows fall upon the children of God. At the very hour, when nature was clothed in her spring beauties; when the leaves and the flowers were filling the air around his mansion with their fragrance, and the birds were singing their sweet songs, his spirit passed to the Paradise above, where flowers never fade, nor fruits decay—where

the atmosphere is ever filled with the far sweeter songs of angels and the redeemed.

Through a kind providence, he was permitted to go to heaven, from the very house, in which, on the 29th day of March, 1789, he was born. After an eventful life of nearly eighty years, during which he had passed through perils, incident to a long earthly career; and had varied experiences of joy and of sorrow; after returning to his home and enjoying years of tranquillity surrounded by an endeared family, and a large circle of friends, he peacefully resigns his earthly life where he had received it, and departs to enjoy the life everlasting.

In entering upon a sketch of the life and character of our beloved, venerated friend, I am greatly embarrassed at the outset, by his known and expressed aversion to any public eulogy, or even to a recital in a funeral discourse of the prominent events in his life. And in this feeling, those, most intimately related to him, so fully concur; that I am constrained, though very reluctantly, to suppress many facts of interest, and to sacrifice the desires and cherished purposes of a grateful pastor, to the

wishes of those to whom the memory of the departed is most dear.

Were I permitted to give expression to my own feelings, and to testify, as fully as I might, to the value of a signal illustration of a sincere Christian friendship, I would say much, with the hope of stimulating others to the culture of this most important feature of every genuine Christian character. For when I say that in this death I have lost a friend; that this church has lost a long tried and valued friend; that our institutions of learning and benevolent societies, mourn the loss of one of their noblest benefactors; and that multitudes of the poor will sadly miss the hand that has so often been generously extended for their relief, I use language, the full import of which can be realized only by the bereaved. And associated with these munificent private and public charities, there was an absence of the spirit of ostentation, and a desire that they should not be spoken of, such as I never knew surpassed in any other individual. On one occasion after he had been giving very large sums to the educational institutions of our church, reference was made to

the feelings of approbation with which his gifts were regarded, when he remarked, "All that is nothing to me; if I can only secure the approbation of God, it is all that I want." And the manner in which he expressed this desire showed that it came directly from his heart.

We have said that this church has lost a long tried and valued friend. From ancestral ties; early associations, and personal attachments, this church was very dear to Elder Van Rensselaer. As a worshiper, or as a member, he has been connected with it from childhood. There are some now living who can remember the family pew in the old church edifice in State street where sabbath after sabbath gathered the sainted father, the beloved mother, the only son, and the only sister, all of whom now rest, in the silence of the grave. But what was most remarkable, in this changing country of ours, was the fact, that for nine generations back, the ancestors of our departed friend, were connected with this church organization, and were devoted to promoting its spiritual interests and prosperity.

The precise date of the origin of this church

cannot be given with any degree of certainty. It is said by some that the Collegiate church in New York was organized as early as 1619. Among the manuscripts of the late Rev. Dr. Livingston, there is reference to a list of the members of that church in 1622. But Dr. Livingston, in another of his manuscripts, says that "in Albany they had ministers, as early as any in New York, if not before them." It is therefore possible that this is the oldest church in the country.

But however this may be, it is certain that Killian Van Rensselaer, who came to take possession of his colony here in 1637, was identified with it, and the church in its then feeble state derived no small degree of its support from him, and his descendants. And, in devotion to its interests, the mantle has literally fallen from father to son, in an unbroken succession. Of the father of him whose remains we so lately followed to the tomb, it was said in a discourse delivered soon after his death: "An elder in the church of his fathers, he seemed to count it his best honor to serve the followers of Jesus; and when a member of eccle-

siastical courts, as he frequently was, he never shrank from any labor, nor became weary in well doing. It may be safely said that the church he so much loved, approaching, as it does, more nearly than any other, the order of the apostolic age, became dearer, and yet dearer to his heart, as he drew near his end." And this can be as fully said of the son, as of this venerated father.

His inquiries not only of his pastor but of others, were very frequent, in regard to the spiritual condition and prosperity of the church; and one of the strongest desires of his heart, amid the infirmities of age, was to have strength to come and worship again with us, in this sanctuary.

During a very recent conversation, he expressed an earnest desire, and even a hope that he might be able to be present at our next communion season. Thus, by his personal interests; his regular attendance upon all our public services whenever his health would permit, and by his liberal contributions, he manifested the ardor of his love for the church of his fathers. May we not here express the earnest desire, that his mantle in this respect may fall upon many before

me. For among the Christian virtues that should be cultivated, that will afford satisfaction, through life, and in the dying hour; and that are potent for good, now and in the future, devotion to one's church, occupies a high position. There are not a few before me, whose ancestors, for, at least, several generations, have been connected with this church. Your fathers have worshiped God, and kept holy the Sabbath day, and cultivated their Christian graces, and made preparation for the happiness and glories of heaven, in union with this church organization. Through this church they labored to bring souls to Jesus, and to extend the kingdom of our blessed Saviour. Upon their children, therefore, rest peculiar obligations to do all in their power to sustain a church with which such precious historic associations and interests are connected. If they have not already given their hearts to Christ, and consecrated their lives to his service, and publicly professed their faith in him, they are under a great pressure of responsibility to do so with all possible speed. Those pious parents who, at this altar, dedicated you in infancy to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, did

so with the earnest desire and firm hope, that you would follow in their footsteps, as they followed Christ. And from the heights of the celestial cities in which they now dwell, they may long have been looking down, watching to see you moving towards the cross in faith and love; to see your heart melting under the power of divine truth; to see you girding on the Christian armor, and fighting for the prizes of immortality. There is certainly nothing unreasonable in the thought that they form a part of the great cloud of witnesses to whom the apostle refers, under whose inspection the Christian is called to run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

It is true, that we know but little of the connection between the spiritual world, and the inhabitants of this earth; but there are evidences for the opinion that among the angels and redeemed in heaven there is a knowledge of what is transpiring on earth, of which we have now no conception. And when the wonders of that world burst upon our vision, as they have so recently upon our departed friend, we shall see

what an array of motives exist, for the culture of every Christian virtue. We shall see why the Apostle, forgetting what was behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, pressed forward with so much zeal for the prize of his high calling. We shall see the reasons for the scriptural calls, "Strive to enter in at the straight gate;" "Be thou faithful unto death and thou shalt receive the crown of life." And the appeal that comes from the example of the departed, and from the solemnity of this hour to the descendants of those who have passed from this church militant to the church triumphant, comes also with force to every member of this church and congregation. By the memories of the past, and by our hopes for the future we ask for your individual and cordial cooperation, in the work of advancing here the Redeemer's Kingdom; of swelling, with divine aid, the numbers who shall pass through this gateway to the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. We ask for your earnest prayers; your regular attendance upon the means of grace, your generous gifts to the treasury of the Lord, and that deep, abiding

interest in the prosperity of this Zion, that characterized the life of him, whose memory, we, this day, delight to honor.

There comes to us also from the character of the departed, a beautiful and impressive testimony, to the power of the religion of Jesus to afford strength and comfort to the Christian in his declining years. The seeking of perfect repose upon Jesus, and a firm hope of immortal happiness through his great atonement, in view of approaching death, is not a recent thing with him, whose loss we this day mourn. Through long and weary years of bodily weakness and suffering, he has sought with extreme diligence and earnest prayer, to be prepared for the hour when he should be called to stand in the presence of his God. As long ago as under the date of February 15, 1864, I find the following record in my Journal: "After dinner Gen. Van Rensselaer sought a private interview with me to converse on his soul's welfare. He manifested all the humility, sincerity, and piety of a child. At his request I prayed with him; and in rising he thanked me cordially. I trust that God heard the prayer." The next

day I find the following record in my Journal :
“Visited Gen. Van Rensselaer again, and read to him the sermon on old age, as he was not able to be out on the sabbath.” This sermon had been preached the sabbath previous; and I may remark here, that whenever he was unable to attend upon our sabbath services, he so missed the privilege of worshiping God in the sanctuary, that he desired to have one of the sermons read to him, and often accompanied with prayer.

And I may say without hesitation, and with gratitude to Almighty God, that during the five years that I have ministered to his spiritual necessities, his mind has been upon heavenly things. I have never known in the history of my ministry, a man who manifested a more earnest desire for a full assurance that his sins were pardoned, and his name written in the book of life, than he who has left us the past week, for the spirit land. I have never known a Christian who felt more deeply his own unworthiness, and his entire reliance upon the merits of Jesus Christ, for salvation, than did our departed friend. And

during long and weary months and years of debility and suffering, he was sustained by the religion of Jesus. And when in weakness and pain, that it was most touching to behold, not a murmur ever escaped his lips. When spoken to in regard to his extreme weakness, or suffering, he would reply by speaking of the goodness of God, and the many mercies by which he was surrounded.

He lived also on prayer. If he was visited, without the visit being accompanied with prayer he felt keenly the disappointment. And for every act of kindness, he manifested the utmost gratitude. Whenever I rose from my knees at the close of the prayer, his uniform expression was, "I thank you."

Those lips are now sealed in death. The hand that has so often been extended, in expression of warm friendship, is cold and motionless. The form that has been seen for years past, at the head of the elders' pew will be seen here no more. The places and objects of earth, that have known him in the past, will know him no more forever. His acquaintance with the sunlight; with the

beauties of an earthly spring, with material objects upon which he has gazed for years, and which are hung with vivid associations of childhood and maturer life, has closed forever. Other scenes now surround him. Greater realities press upon his consciousness. The grandeurs of existence have opened before him. Corruption has been exchanged for incorruption; the mortal has put on immortality. He knows now what he could never have known before of the value of a Saviour; the blessings of redemption; the greatness of God's moral government; the splendors of the everlasting throne: the meaning of the words, heaven, glory, eternal life.

But, beloved, we are not simply spectators of character, and of death. We have a personal interest in them. To each of us death is as certain as though it were a past event. The connection between our thoughts, purposes and deeds, and our future destiny, is as real and vital as though we were at this instant experiencing that destiny. I wish that it were in our power to hold your fixed attention to this solemn fact. The earnestness of our feeling is expressed

by the prophet in his cry, "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." We need wisdom to make us realize the momentous interests of this future ; a future that at any instant may be to us a present reality. He is the wisest man, who, in his contemplations, plans and hopes, takes in the whole of his being. The power of thought has been given to us for this, and if it is not used for this, to what purpose is it that the Almighty One has created us higher than the beasts that perish, and but a little lower than the angels who live forever? God has placed us in this world, to think of another. He has not placed us here to grasp at transient pleasures ; to give our affections to perishable objects ; to make the vanities of the world our supreme good. No. As our existence opens in time, he teaches us that it is for eternity. A thousand providences, calamities, whisper in our ear the word, eternity. Death comes, and comes often, to point us to our graves, and through them to eternity. The dread messenger takes up the cry : Oh, that they understood this ; that they

are hastening to the presence of God, to the judgment throne! Oh, that they would consider their latter end!

Would you, beloved hearer, give this day, or better this week, to the highest ends possible; would you improve the hours, to the greatest conceivable extent, you would give them to serious thought, accompanied with prayer, upon your immortal existence. And out of the years that some of you have given to the world why should you not rescue, a day or a week, for your soul, for spiritual profit, for harvests of immortal honors and happiness? A week thus spent would be more to you than all of human life beside. From it would burst forth fountains, from which would flow rivers of salvation forever. From it you would scatter seeds for immortal harvests.

Oh, how precious now to our dear departed brother, are the hours that he spent in the careful study of the word of God! Well do I remember during the years preceding his recent great infirmities, that I scarcely ever entered in the forenoon, his little room, without finding him

with the Bible in his hand. Month after month and year after year this precious volume has been his daily companion. And the very last powers of his fading vision were given to the study of the inspired pages.

Oh, how precious now to him are the many pages, through which his desires and aspirations ascended to heaven!

How precious now, viewed from celestial heights, are the improved opportunities of regularly worshipping God in his sanctuary on earth!

How precious the improved opportunities of contributing to the maintenance of Christ's church and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom! The language of a dying Christian benefactor might have been uttered by our departed friend: "What I have spent is gone, what I have lost is gone. But what I have given away I carry with me."

How precious was the act of repentance for sin, the yielding of the heart of Christ; the public profession of faith, the struggles to conquer the world, and to be faithful to the Master, unto death!

“Tell me not in mournful numbers,
 Life is but an empty dream ;
 For the soul is dead that slumbers,
 And things are not what they seem.

Life is real ! life is earnest,
 And the grave is not its goal,
 Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
 Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment and not sorrow,
 Is our destined end and way ;
 But to act, that each to-morrow
 Find us further than to-day.

Lives of true men all remind us
 We can make our lives sublime,
 And, departing, leave behind us
 Footprints on the sands of time ;

Footprints that perhaps another
 Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
 A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
 Seeing shall take heart again.

Let us then be up and doing,
 With a heart for any fate ;
 Still achieving, still pursuing,
 Learn to labor and to wait.”

THE DEATH
OF
STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

THE LATE STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

At a meeting of the Consistory of the First Reformed Church of Albany, held Tuesday, May 26, at twelve o'clock; present: Rufus W. Clark, President; Charles Van Zandt, John McNaughton, J. O. Towner, Elders; John E. Page, George W. Carpenter Jr., James H. Gross, Edward Douglass, Deacons; the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, We have received with deep sorrow the tidings of the death of the senior member of this body, Elder Stephen Van Rensselaer, therefore,

Resolved, That while we bow in submission to the dispensation of an all-wise and holy God, we cannot but mourn the loss of one greatly endeared to us by the ties of personal friendship, and the attachments formed by a long and harmonious connection with him in various services in promoting the interests of religion in this community.

Resolved, That we bear, with profound satisfaction, our testimony to his munificent liberality to this church, to the various public educational institutions, to the societies for the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and to every department of Christian charity.

Resolved, That our gratitude is due to Almighty God for the abundant evidences that our departed brother has left of his preparation to meet his pious ancestors, who, after having for nine successive generations worshiped God in connection with our church organization, have been called by the Great Master to the General Assembly and Church of the first born, in Heaven.

Resolved, That we extend to the bereaved widow and children our sincerest and warmest sympathies in this hour of their great affliction, and we commend them to the Heavenly Father, who will cause all things to work together for good to them that love Him.

Resolved, That these resolutions be placed upon the Church records, and that a copy be sent to the sorrowing family, with the prayer that the God of all grace and consolation would sustain, comfort, and bless them.

RUFUS W. CLARK,

President of Consistory.

Geo. W. Carpenter, Jr., Secretary.

THE LATE GENERAL STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

At a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Young Men's Christian Association, held Friday, May 29, 1868, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, God, the disposer of all things, has in his Providence, removed by death one of our life members, our venerable and honored friend General Stephen Van Rensselaer,

Resolved, That, while we bow in submission to His divine will, we sincerely mourn his loss. That in him we have lost a personal friend, a public benefactor, and an earnest supporter of our Association.

Resolved, That we hereby offer to his bereaved family, in this

hour of their deep affliction, our condolence, and that we commend them to our Heavenly Father, who alone can afford them that comfort which will sustain them in this severe trial.

Resolved, That we attend his funeral, and thus pay to him the tribute of respect which we sincerely entertain.

Resolved, That these resolutions be entered upon the records of the Association, and that a copy be transmitted to the family of deceased, and also published in the daily papers.

At a meeting of the Board of Lumber Dealers, held on the 27th inst., the following resolutions were unanimously adopted :

WHEREAS, It has pleased the Sovereign Disposer of all events to take out of this world our landlord and friend, General Stephen Van Rensselaer, whose intercourse with us has been distinguished by fairness, considerateness and courtesy ; therefore,

Resolved, That we deeply deplore his death and feel that in him we have lost a firm friend, the community a useful and upright citizen, the poor a bountiful benefactor, and the church a cherished and charitable member.

Resolved, That we sincerely sympathize with the bereaved family, and as a token of our respect and condolence we will attend his funeral in a body.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to the family of the deceased, and that they be published in the daily papers.

DEAN SAGE,
Vice President.

Chas. B. Nichols, Secretary,

At a meeting of the Albany Institute, held May 27, 1868, the following resolutions were offered by Mr. Charles M. Jenkins, and unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That in placing the name of Stephen Van Rensselaer upon our records, with the many cherished and respected names which have been so recently and rapidly added to the list of deceased members, we find an occasion and call for the most truthful and befitting expressions of our regret, sorrow and sympathy.

That by the death of Mr. Van Rensselaer the Institute has lost one of its earliest and most efficient patrons and supporters, and the surviving members, in common with our citizens, have lost the presence and living example of one, whose generous charities and benefactions have been quietly but effectively continued during a long life ; whose love of justice and regard for the rights of others were strong by nature, and invigorated by constant exercise ; whose respect for truth and detestation of deceit were always deeply felt and vigorously expressed ; whose wealth was never used as a means of oppression or aggrandizement ; and whose long-cherished Christian hopes could largely trust to that measure of forgiveness which he had established in forgiving his debtors.

That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded by the secretary to the family of the deceased, and that they be published in the city papers ; and that, as a farther mark of respect, the Institute will attend in a body at the funeral of Mr. Van Rensselaer.

JAMES WEIR MASON,
Secretary.

From The Albany Argus, May 26, 1868.

DEATH OF STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

Stephen Van Rensselaer, the "patroon" of Albany, died yesterday in the eightieth year of his age. Another, and one of the most prominent, of the "old landmarks" of this city—one of the connecting links between the earliest history of Albany and the present generation—has passed away. His death, the result of the infirmities of age, had been anticipated for nearly two years past.

Gen. Van Rensselaer was the only son of Stephen Van Rensselaer, the "Old Patroon" of Albany, by his first wife, who was a daughter of Gen. Schuyler of revolutionary fame. Alexander Hamilton, who was his uncle by marriage with another daughter of Gen. Schuyler, drew up the leases on which the manor of Rensselaerwick was rented.

Gen. Van Rensselaer never sought official honors. He lived a quiet and unobtrusive life; but he leaves behind him an enviable reputation for the sterling virtues which distinguished the race from which he was descended. The Manor House was always the home of an elegant and refined hospitality. He was liberal in his benefactions, and dispensed his wealth freely to all charitable objects, and to the church, of which he was for many years a prominent member.

From The Albany Morning Express, May 26, 1868.

DEATH OF GEN. STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

Our old citizens are rapidly passing away. Within the last few months especially we have been called upon to record the death of an unusual number. To-day Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer, the venerable Patroon is added to the list. He died yesterday afternoon in the eightieth year of his age. We have not at hand at the late hour of receiving the intelligence the facilities for preparing a record of his life. It extended, we need not say, over all of the active and growing period of our city's history; and with many of its enterprises, especially since the death of his honored and esteemed father, his name has been identified. He was a man of generous impulses and public spirit.

FUNERAL OF STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

This funeral was largely attended yesterday afternoon, and the services were unusually impressive. The following were the bearers: Gouverneur Kemble, of Cold Spring; Jacob H. Ten Eyck, Esq., Hon. Erastus Corning, Harmon Pumpelly, Esq., H. H. Martin, Esq., Major Gen. Jno. Tayler Cooper, Hon. John V. L. Pruyn, of Albany; Henry Burden, Esq., of Troy; Howard Boyd, Esq., Gen. S. V. R. Talcott, Charles Van Zandt, Esq., Col. John O. Cole, of Albany.

Officiating Clergymen — Rev. Drs. R. W. Clark, W. B. Sprague, of Albany; Rev. Dr. Vermilye, of New York; Rev. Dr. Kennedy, of Troy.

Physicians — Thomas Hun, M. D., James P. Boyd, M. D.

At 3 o'clock the casket was brought down in the hall, and a prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Clark. The procession moved to the First Reformed Church in the following order in carriages:

Porters, clergy, physicians, elders of the church, deacons, the members of the Albany Institute, lumber merchants in a body, hearse, relatives, servants, friends.

The clergy, physicians and bearers wore white linen scarfs, and the servants were clothed in black clothing and black kid gloves. The service at church consisted of reading portions of Scripture by Dr. Kennedy, sermon by Dr. Vermilye, prayer by Dr. Clark, benediction by Dr. Sprague.

The remains were conveyed to the family grounds in the Albany Cemetery. The attendants filled thirty carriages.

From The New York World.

STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER OF ALBANY.

It will be the duty of the Albany Institute, of one of the departments of which Mr. Van Rensselaer was president, to prepare an accurate necrological notice. In his connection with the Institute, he kept bright the

chain of succession from his distinguished father's service in the old Society of Arts, of which Chancellor Livingston and Surveyor General De Witt were also members.

Mr. Van Rensselaer's social position had no superior in our country, and yet no man could be less pretentious than he was. Indeed, we thought that he did not evince sufficient interest in the historical associations of his family, whose history, unlike the great mass of the people of the New World, had an unbroken career of intelligence and respect and opulence, possessed before their emigration hither, and never changed or lost. The present manor house, which has few beyond it in all that constitutes an elegant residence, is more than a century old, and has, what is so rare in the mutable fortunes of our land, in all respects now as when it was built, the same friendly associations. It has been enlarged, and possessed of the advancing comforts and luxuries of modern art and taste, but the iron figures of 1765 yet designate when it rose to succeed a former manor house whose halls had opened to the hospitalities that met the best names of the colonial period.

Mr. Van Rensselaer enjoyed all the advantages of his name and fortune, in an education and association with the most cultivated society of this country and of Europe, at a day when in Great Britain the greatest names in literature were yet represented by the living. While in Paris, he saw the return of the first Napoleon from the dreadful campaign of Moscow, and forty

years after, saw the rejoicings and pageants that graced the third Napoleon's rehearsal of the awful tragedy of war.

When, after his first visit to Europe, he returned to Albany, he took possession of the large mansion in North Market street, a structure which in that day was supposed to present the last degree of excellence in house architecture, and whose capacious and abundant apartments yet remain to prove with what broad ideas of the elegance of housekeeping it was designed. When Mr. Van Rensselaer succeeded, under the relinquishment of Madame Van Rensselaer, to the manor house, the dwelling had other occupants; but it found, many years afterward, a tenant who brought to it an honored name, an old family, and a broad judgment of what a gentleman should be, when John A. King made it during his administration, the executive mansion. As "The Young Patroon's House" it was for many years one of the remarkable buildings of Albany.

By courtesy of the new, and by the attachment of the old citizens, the designation of Patroon was pleasantly given to the gentleman whose decease is just chronicled; although for almost all his life, it was known that he would not, as did his father, come to the possession of the entire manor. What magnificent estate was that manor — twelve miles of land, wooded, watered, cultured, tenanted — each way — north, south, east and west, from the doors of the manor house. It was an inheritance of unquestioned opulence, and it was held by the Stephen Van Rensselaer who died in 1839,

in all the advantages of great wealth, and in the respect, and in the esteem of the people on and around the manor. Of the miserable subterfuges to escape from the obligations of contracts, whose only weakness had been in the kindness of the owner of the fee-ephemeron, which owed all their life to the craft of short-lived political cunning — of these, it is not necessary to speak.

Even an elective judiciary respected the right too much to allow them more than temporary triumph of dishonor. The estate left by the Old Patroon was sufficient to endow with great wealth all the descendants. So much of it as came with the manor house, felt the accretion in value, which belongs to the neighborhood of a prosperous city. Its value heightened with all the progress of trade and commerce, and at last, the manor house itself is with all its beauty of park and garden, its treasures of flower and foliage, closely surrounded by land that for purposes of traffic or residence, is in every foot, of augmenting value. The old stone mill, a curious illustration of the customs of a far gone feudal time, is itself by the very gateway of the house.

Of course, the social life of Mr. Van Rensselaer as of his predecessors at the manor house, as well the house of 1765 as of those which preceded it, was surrounded by all that was most agreeable in the intercourse of the educated and cultured people of the colony and of the state. Yet the hospitalities of the manor house, bright as may be their associations in many hearts of past or present joyous hours, have a more enduring and more valuable life. The manor house has always been distin-

guished for its courtesies and kindnesses to ministers of the gospel, with broad interpretation of the highest place among men. So the dying missionary Abeel found it, and so a long record of good men have experienced. Nor did its liberalities stop at its portals or find only the clergyman. It was long a tradition among Christian men and women in Albany, names now seldom heard, forgotten of earth but remembered of heaven, how the Old Patroon sent to that godly man, old Henry Fero, when on his death-bed, not merely liberal provision for his necessities and comforts, but humble entreaties to be remembered in the dying saint's prayers.

In the simple ways of those times, it seemed to heighten the satisfaction of this incident in these Christian people's recollection, that this was done while the Patroon was in his congressional duties at Washington. Do thoughts such as these come over men's mind in this hour of fever at the Capitol?

Mr. Van Rensselaer's life illustrates the general progress of luxury in our society. Those incidents of variety and elegance in equipage, of the most costly of books in private library, of sculpture, of the artistic in the dwelling — all these possessed so profusely and by so many now were, in his younger years most and best to be found at his father's residence. He was accustomed to hear the paternal estate spoken of as a proverb of opulence; and what is so rarely known among us, his whole life saw no practical diminution of it, for I believe it to have been true that the *income* of his own

estate, though not a fraction of the great manor, was equal to or more than that enjoyed by his father, the rise of productiveness having supplied the difference. With him passes away the name which seemed to be almost in itself an appendage of the manor.

I alluded in the commencement of this article to the duty of the Albany Institute in relation to the deceased.

It is of the most gratifying of the literary announcements of the day that the *History of the Great Manors* of this state, is now in preparation by Meredith Read, Esq., of Albany. This gentleman has won for himself the commendation of the learned in Europe and here by his researches concerning Henry Hudson. He has delicacy of taste, the skill of composition, and has that also, without which it is impossible to write history—a patient perseverance in that hard labor which insists on the truth.

The history of the Van Rensselaer manor will be one of the most valuable chapters in the annals of New York. From the day this seeming wild purchase of transatlantic soil presented itself to the dealer in jewels and precious stones, till the hour when he first arrived, Van Rensselaer saw that the broad acres of the Hudson and Mohawk were better even than the diamonds of the court of the Stadtholder—all these years give a varied and pleasant history, changing men and changing manners; but yet so much of the old time is left as even in 1868 to permit us to chronicle as a chapter of public interest the death of the Patroon.

SENTINEL.

From The Christian Intelligencer, June 4, 1868.

GEN. S. VAN RENSSELAER.

After protracted illness, this widely-known and beloved friend, on Monday, May 25th, departed from this life at the Manor House, Albany, in the eightieth year of his age. The funeral solemnities were held on Friday afternoon. At three o'clock the relations, ministers, pall-bearers, and a large circle of the friends of the deceased assembled at the Manor House, where prayer was made by the pastor, Rev. Dr. Clark. The company then proceeded to the North Church, which was densely filled with a deeply attentive and sympathizing audience, and the funeral services were solemnized. Dr. Kennedy, a former pastor, read select passages of Scripture, and gave out an appropriate hymn. Dr. Vermilye, also a former pastor, made an address. Dr. Clark offered prayer, and Dr. Sprague announced the closing hymn and gave the benediction, when the procession was formed, and the body was conveyed to the family burying ground at the cemetery in West Troy.

The occasion was one of great interest, and much feeling was manifested by the large assemblage, and by many venerable men, the life-long friends of the deceased, who followed him to his burial. Thus the grave has closed over one long known and much beloved in social circles, an elder for many years in the denomination, whose attachment to the church has

been shown by steadfast adherence to its worship, and by many instances of unostentatious liberality. In a good old age, amidst the affectionate regrets of multitudes, he has at length been gathered to his fathers.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 785 245 0